Running for Council

Part of the Community Management Series

Manitoba
Aboriginal and
Northern Affairs

PROSPECTIVE MEMBERS OF COUNCIL

I am pleased to provide you with a copy of the Aboriginal and Northern Affairs handbook for candidates for community council office, titled *Running for Council.*

This handbook has been prepared to assist residents of Northern Affairs communities who may be interested in running for Council in their community.

The handbook gives a general overview of local government, and takes you through the election process from nomination to the roles and responsibilities of Council.

If you need any further information, please contact the staff at Community Support Services or Inter-Regional Services, listed on the last page of the handbook.

Thank you for your interest in community elections.

Yours sincerely,

Eric Robinson,
Minister

RUNNING FOR OFFICE

Part of the Community Management Series

Subject: A handbook for candidates for community council office	
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ABORIGINAL AND NORTHERN AFFAIRS
1999

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN THE CANADIAN SYSTEM:

ROLE OF MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT:

The Constitution Act assigns responsibility for municipal government to the provinces. Provincial governments, in turn, have granted authority and decision-making powers to the government closest to the people – local government.

The purposes of a community council are to:

- provide good government
- provide and maintain local services, facilities or other things that, in the opinion of the council, are necessary or desirable for all or a part of the community
- develop and maintain safe and viable communities.

A council is responsible for:

- developing and evaluating policies and programs for the community
- ensuring that its powers, duties and functions are appropriately carried out
- exercising the powers, duties and functions given to the council under *The Northern Affairs Act* and other Acts.

The Act sets out the duties of each member of council to:

- consider and bring to the council's attention anything that would promote the well-being and interests of the community.
- participate in meetings of the council and of council committees and other bodies to which the council appoints the member.
- keep in confidence matters discussed at meetings closed to the public.
- participate generally in evaluating the policies and programs of Northern Affairs.
- perform any other duty or function delegated to the member by the council, *The Northern Affairs Act* and other Acts.

In addition to performing a member's duties, the head of council has a duty to:

- preside over council meetings, except when the procedures bylaw or legislation otherwise provides;
- provide leadership and direction to the council; and
- perform any other duty or function assigned to a head of council by the council or legislation.

The council is a continuing body, and proceedings begun by one community council may be carried on by its successors.

Legislation provides that a council may act only by resolution or bylaw. A bylaw is a "law-making" action at the community level. It is the equivalent of provincial or federal legislative action. Bylaws are the formal enactment of rules and regulations under the authority of the Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs.

Resolutions express a decision of council in the form of a motion that is moved, seconded and adopted by a majority vote. A resolution is not as formal as a bylaw but it is just as binding on the community, unless it is reversed or amended under procedures set out in *The Northern Affairs Act*.

A Northern Affairs Council acts COLLECTIVELY AS A BODY, not with any member acting individually, UNLESS authority to do so is expressly given that member by a council resolution.

DEVELOPMENT OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE

In 1956 the Manitoba Legislature passed a resolution calling for a study of the living conditions of the people in the North. The report was submitted to government in 1959. It recommended the establishment of a community development program to help people solve their own problems. As a result, the Community Development program was established in 1961.

Under the first *Northern Manitoba Affairs Act* (1966), the province assumed responsibility for providing municipal services to designated northern communities. The legislation created the Northern Affairs Commission.

In 1969 the Commission began to assist in the election and establishment of community councils. Elections were held annually, holding mayor and councillors accountable to their local constituents at the polls. In 1970 amendments made to the Act indicated a major shift in the government's orientation to the North. They emphasized the need to help communities provide their own services, rather than government providing them directly.

By 1979, there were 23 communities with elected mayors and councillors, administering their own funds. There were also 24 communities that had local committees appointed by the Minister.

As of January 2000, we have one incorporated community, 39 communities that elect a mayor and council on a three-year cycle and nine communities that have a contact person appointed by the Minister for a three-year term.

WHAT IS EXPECTED OF COUNCIL MEMBERS?

YOUR COMMITMENT TO COUNCIL

You should review or learn about the components of a local government system, their roles and inter-relationships. How much time will be required for council business? If you wish to be an active council member, you may be faced with many demands on your time. You should have strong reasons for seeking election, such as promoting and improving the quality of life and encouraging development of your community.

Most councils hold regular meetings twice a month, but some meet only once a month. In addition to regular meetings, you will have to attend special meetings of council, committee and board meetings, and various public meetings. You may be asked to represent your council on boards and committees, requiring both preparation and meeting time. If you intend to be an informed participant, you will have to spend time in research and learning about the issues. You will be asked to assist in presenting new initiatives to the community, and to meet with government officials to discuss municipal projects and problems. You will be asked to attend community gatherings to hear what people are saying and show your interest in your community.

You should also be prepared for telephone calls at home and visits from residents in your community. You will be expected to follow up on their concerns. Learning how to manage your time so that you can adequately handle both your personal and public life is an important part of being an effective member of council.

In Northern Affairs, the Northern Association of Community Councils (NACC) works to improve conditions and legislation for member communities. You may be asked to attend

the conventions sponsored by this association or become involved in its affairs.

TERMS OF OFFICE

After a regular election, the new mayor or councillor's term of office begins 14 days after the day of their respective election and expires 14 days after the next regular election that completes the term.

Within 30 days of being elected, a person elected as a member must complete a declaration of qualification (Election Form 22) and, before entering on the duties of a member, complete a declaration of office (Election Form 23). Both declarations must be filed with the returning officer, who will forward them to the principal electoral officer.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

A member of council must be able to represent the interest of the community, any person in the community, as well as the member's own personal interest, except where this would result in a personal benefit to the member or a member's dependant. Where a personal benefit exists, there may be a "conflict of interest."

"Conflict of Interest" means any situation in which a member of a local committee, community council or incorporated community council:

- may benefit directly or indirectly, to the exclusion of others, as the result of information or action taken in council, or
- may reasonably be perceived as receiving such a benefit.

The Local Government Development Division Policy Manual sets out guidelines for council members to identify when a conflict of interest exists, and a procedure for handling these situations.

Upon election to council, and before taking the oath of office, members must give the community clerk a statement indicating direct interest they or their dependants may have in any business, corporation or other organization in the community. They must also declare direct interest in any land (other than their principal residence) they or any dependants living with them own, lease or permit, and a list of all persons who are their dependants.

Members cannot vote or participate in discussing any item where they or a dependant has a direct or indirect financial interest. During the discussion and voting, they must withdraw from the meeting, or that part of the meeting, by leaving the room where the meeting is taking place.

A member cannot attempt to influence another member in such a matter.

Whenever there is material change in a member's circumstances, the member must advise the clerk of such changes at once, by filing an amended statement of assets and interests in accordance with the policy.

A copy of any statement or amendment filed with the clerk must be confidentially forwarded to the appropriate Aboriginal and Northern Affairs Regional Office.

Items that do not create a conflict of interest are also listed in the policy, along with copies of disclosure forms, and the duties of the clerk in handling these disclosures.

PROBLEM SOLVING:

Help is available from many sources to assist council in solving problems in your community. Council members with previous experience may be of assistance. Remember the old adage "those who do not learn from the lessons of history are condemned to relive them." Your community administrator or clerk is experienced with the operation of the community, *The Northern Affairs Act* and other laws relevant to your community operation, and is available for advice.

Aboriginal and Northern Affairs staff can also assist with your concerns. The department conducts orientation seminars for newly elected members of council, usually held following regular elections. The seminars are conducted by the Community Support Services Branch, on request from the council. They provide a basic understanding of council administration and operations.

BEING A MEMBER OF COUNCIL:

The voters of your community have elected **you** to look after the public good of the whole community. They have put their faith and trust in your fair sense and ability. Keep in mind that whatever benefits the community as a whole benefits your area as well. Your own special interests should not interfere with or dominate council business. You are **part of a team**.

As stated earlier, council carries out its business by resolutions and bylaws. The procedure, agenda and general rules governing the council and its meetings are outlined in its council procedures bylaw. Under *The Northern Affairs Act*, every incorporated community MUST have such a bylaw. It is recommended that self-reliant communities also pass a council procedures bylaw. It is designed to help council conduct its business in an orderly and efficient manner. Council must review the bylaw at least once during its term of office.

A procedures bylaw must provide for:

- regular council meetings, and the day, time and place of the meetings;
- the type and amount of notice to be given for regular meetings; the procedure to be followed and the type and amount of notice to be given to change day, time or place;
- the type and amount of notice to be given for a special meeting;
- rules for the conduct of council meetings;
- rules for public participation at council meetings;
- a procedure for appointing a member to act as head of council if the head and deputy head are unable to act or the offices are vacant; and
- the time within which a special meeting must be called by the head of council and take place.

In incorporated communities, the council must establish an organizational structure for the council operations through a bylaw, which must be reviewed at least once during its term of office. It is recommended that self-reliant communities do the same.

An organizational bylaw must provide for:

- the establishment of council committees, and their duties and functions.
- the appointment of a deputy head of council to act when the head is unable to carry out his/her powers, duties and functions; and

- the manner of appointing persons to council committees and other bodies.

As a potential member of council, you may wish to review these bylaws to ensure you understand how council meetings are to be conducted.

WORKING WITH THE ADMINISTRATION:

Your community employs an administrator and/or clerk and in most cases, depending on the size of your community, other staff. Their responsibilities are summarized as follows:

The Administrator:

- follows the council's Personnel Policy concerning council employees, if applicable.
- ensures that all pertinent correspondence, financial information and items of council business are presented at the council meeting, answered properly and filed in an acceptable filing system.
- ensures that proper agendas and proper minutes of council meetings are prepared and distributed.
- ensures that all funds received are deposited and all expenditures processed in accordance with council and Department direction.
- ensures that all financial records of council are completed and up to date in accordance with council and Department direction.
- ensures that budgets, capital projects and other applications are prepared and submitted to appropriate authorities in sufficient detail and on time.
- ensures the proper collection of property taxes, and other fees as directed.
- ensures that the terms and conditions of funding agreements are followed.
- ensures that all government legislation, regulations and council bylaws are followed.
- participates in training sessions.
- supervises and trains community support staff when required.
- assists council through research and advice on:
  - supervision of budgeting procedure
  - application of policies
  - financing, organizing, planning, analysing, interpreting and evaluating the community needs relating to infrastructure
  - general community growth respecting the development and establishment of local services as defined in *The Northern Affairs Act*.

- assists council with liaison between council and government agencies to ensure maximum benefit to the community and adequate reporting to government departments.
- assists council in understanding their responsibilities through advice on procedures, resolutions, bylaws, project development and management, election procedures and their alternatives and implications.

The Clerk:

- maintains all the financial records of council and council committees (e.g., recreation committee);
- prepares and presents all financial records at month-end;
- processes all council expenditures;
- receives and deposits all council funds;
- reconciles and closes off all financial records at month-end;
- handles all funds and administrative details of council projects;
- prepares or assists in preparing and distributing meeting agendas, resolutions and bylaws;
- assists in interpreting laws and incoming correspondence;
- receives, records and ensures proper handling of correspondence;
- responds to correspondence upon council's direction;
- acts as telephone receptionist in the community office.
- may take minutes at regular and special meetings;
- represents council at meetings with other agencies at council direction;
- discloses approved information to the public;
- participates in applicable training programs developed by the Department at council's direction; and
- maintains the filing system in the office.

Where the community has no administrator, those duties become part of the clerk's duties. Where a community has an administrator and one or more clerical staff, the council may direct a different division of duties.

It is a generally accepted principle that council sets policy and the community administrator and staff carry it out. Your administrator and staff are employed to provide effective and efficient administration, based on their training and experience. Neither council nor the administrator can do an effective job if they do not clearly understand each other's duties and responsibilities. However, often there is no clear line between a policy decision and an administrative action.

Keep in mind that tensions can arise when council thinks the administrator has strayed into their area of authority, or when staff feel council is interfering with their responsibilities. Therefore, it is very important to develop a good working relationship, including an understanding of each point of view, in order to have mutual trust and respect.

To ensure effective and efficient administration, there should be provision for adequate training for your staff to enable them to carry out their duties. They must have the opportunity to learn about new developments in municipal management and administrative practice. With well-trained and informed staff, council can be assured of receiving accurate information on which to base its decisions. Your administration will be a valuable resource to council in its work.

WHO IS DOING THE JOB?

The person elected head of council, when sworn into office, becomes the chief executive officer of the community, or **Mayor**. The mayor is expected to lead the affairs of the community by presiding at all council meetings, regular and special. The mayor maintains order, proper conduct and decorum at all council meetings, and decides questions of order. He/she is a member of all council committees unless council provides otherwise in its organizational bylaw.

The head of council must always be vigilant and active, to ensure that the law of governing the community is duly executed and put into force. He/she usually acts as spokesperson for the community at special community functions, with the news media and when meeting with other agencies.

The Northern Affairs Act allows a deputy mayor to act when the mayor is absent. The deputy then has all the powers of the head of council for that period of time.

Council members are expected to attend all council meetings, and take part in debate and discussion on community business. They work together as a team to decide upon the overall direction of the community. They determine the objectives, goals, programs and general operating rules that the council and administration will follow during the year.

At council meetings, every member present has one vote each time a vote is held. Members are expected to vote every time a vote is called, except when in conflict of interest, in which case affected members are excused from voting.

Willingness by all members of council to reason and discuss issues co-operatively leads to the development of a positively oriented council. The result is a more informed and higher-quality level of decision-making. Lack of team spirit in council quickly leads to divisiveness, development of highly competitive and destructive action, and a general negative spirit among members that can influence the community. Community officials are charged with most important responsibilities. They should seek to represent what they feel is in the best interest of their residents and the community.

It is the duty of the community administrator or clerk to attend all council meetings and record, without note or comment, the resolutions and proceedings. The administrator or clerk should be familiar with the proper conduct of meetings, the procedures bylaw and the provisions and procedures of *The Northern Affairs Act*. A well-informed community administrator or clerk can better assist the elected officials in conducting the business of the community.

A SUMMARY OF THE ELECTION PROCESS:

QUALIFICATIONS

Do you qualify as a candidate? In order to be eligible for election to a community council, you must fulfil certain legal qualifications. To qualify to stand for council office, you must be:

- a Canadian citizen;
- at least 18 years of age on the day of the election;
- an elector of the community; and
- not subject to any disqualification under *The Northern Affairs Act* or any other Act.

The Northern Affairs Act sets out a number of occupations and situations that disqualify a person from running for election or remaining a member of council. Among these are being a justice of the peace, a member of the council of another municipality or community and a member of the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba. A person who ceases to be a voter is disqualified. As well, no one can be elected to more than one office. Anyone convicted of an offence under an Act who has not paid the fine imposed within the time set by law or the courts is disqualified. There are certain restrictions of eligibility where convictions and judgments under the *Criminal Code* are pending or in process.

Employees of the council are also disqualified, unless they apply for leave of absence during the time of the election. An employee may ask council for a longer leave of absence if successfully elected. It would be wise for candidates to review eligibility requirements and disqualifications with the Returning Officer.

As a candidate, you should be confident in your reasons for seeking election to public office. You should consider the office you are seeking, and the demands of the position as a council member or mayor. Most important, you must like working with people, even those with a differing point of view. Local government is a people business.

ELECTION OFFICIALS

The Northern Affairs Act and the *Northern Manitoba Election Regulation,* MR 43/93, detail the procedures for conducting elections for members of council.

After consulting with the community council, the minister must appoint a returning officer, a revising officer and an enumerator for the community. No one can be both revising officer and enumerator.

Enumerator – The enumerator's job is to compile an accurate list of all people qualified to vote in a community election. This is called the List of Electors. The enumerator must complete the list before every regular election and may also have to do this before a byelection. Any costs incurred by the enumerator in undertaking official duties are submitted for payment by council through the returning officer. The enumerator is responsible to the returning officer.

Revising Officer – The revising officer's job is to see that people wanting to make corrections to the voters list have an opportunity to do so. The revising officer holds a Sitting for Revision (of the voters list) for this purpose. At the Sitting, names can be added to the list and spelling errors corrected. In special cases, names can be taken off the list. A Sitting must be held before every regular council election and byelection. Copies of the revised voters list are used for the poll at the election. The revising officer may also serve as poll clerk. Any costs incurred by the revising officer in undertaking official duties are submitted for payment by council through the returning officer. The revising officer is responsible to the returning officer.

Returning Officer – The returning officer sees that the election process in the community is carried out according to the regulation. The returning officer supervises the other election officers and is responsible to both the council and to the Principal Electoral Officer (PEO) for ensuring that the election is conducted properly. The returning officer can call upon the PEO for direction in interpreting and applying the regulation provisions. Aboriginal and Northern Affairs staff can provide other support.

Poll Clerk – The poll clerk's job is to assist the returning officer at the poll. He/she is appointed by the returning officer. A poll clerk may function as interpreter, if so qualified and has completed the necessary Oaths of Interpreter. The poll clerk also assists in counting the votes when the poll has closed.

NOMINATIONS

At least five days before nomination day, the returning officer publishes or posts a notice, stating when and where completed nomination papers will be received. In a regular election year, the returning officer must receive the nomination papers on a day at least two weeks before polling day, the second Wednesday in February. Normally, nominations are received between 1 p.m. and 9 p.m. at a convenient place in the community.

To be valid, a nomination paper (Election Form 3) must be accompanied by a written acceptance and declaration (Election Form 4), stating that the candidate is eligible to run for election to office. The declaration is signed in front of a Commissioner for Oaths or another person qualified to administer an oath. A nomination paper that is not properly completed will be rejected by the returning officer. It is your responsibility as a prospective candidate to ensure that you have properly completed the nomination paper before filing it with the returning officer. You do not have to file it in person. If you believe the document has been completed properly, someone else may file it for you. Nomination papers, including a candidate's acceptance and declaration, can be seen by the public, on request, at times and places where they are being received.

TERMS OF OFFICE

Under *The Northern Affairs Act*, terms of office are three years. Half of the council is elected in year one and the other half in year two. The third year of the cycle does not normally have an election. By-elections to fill vacancies can be held at any time. In a regular election, the terms of office of a mayor and councillor begin 14 days after their respective election days and expire 14 days after the next regular election that completes

the term. Therefore, members wishing to serve another term in the same position do not have to resign their positions before being nominated. A person filling a vacancy (by-election) on a council takes office immediately after election day and holds office for the rest of the vacant position's term.

THE CAMPAIGN

After filing nomination papers, you decide what type of a campaign you want to run: for example, go house to house to meet the people, hand out brochures promoting yourself and what you want to see happen in the community, or hold information meetings. You can put up posters. You can participate in town hall debates.

During a campaign, you may check with the Returning Officer to ensure that your campaign activities are within regulation guidelines.

You may also appoint, in writing, a scrutineer at any time after your nomination and before the closing of the poll. Give the appointment certificate to the scrutineer, who gives it to the returning officer.

POLLING PLACES

The returning officer establishes a polling place. A polling place cannot be established in premises in which a candidate has an estate or interest, or in licensed premises under *The Liquor Control Act*. It must be located on a ground floor that has access for handicapped voters with mobility. The returning officer must ensure that polling places have a compartment in which voters can mark ballots in private.

ADVANCE POLLS

The advance poll is held four to seven days before the regular poll, to give voters who cannot vote on election day an opportunity to vote. An advance polling place must be open between 5 p.m. and 9 p.m.

VOTING BY MAIL

Mail-in ballots are allowed to voters who cannot come to an advance poll or regular poll because of physical handicap, confinement in a hospital or some similar allowable reason. A request for a mail-in ballot must reach the returning officer at least seven days before a poll. The returning office will have the ballot delivered to the voter, who must ensure that it is returned to the returning officer for deposit in the ballot box.

ASSISTANCE AT THE POLLS

Incapacitated Voters are voters who, even though they may have mobility, have a difficulty in voting because of blindness or some other physical handicap. They can place their mark in the proper place on a Declaration of Incapacitated Elector (Election Form 15A) after the returning officer or poll clerk reads the form to them. The returning officer will complete a Certificate of Attestation (Election Form 15 B). Either another person who has signed a Declaration of Secrecy (Election Form 11) or an election officer may then receive a ballot and help the incapacitated voter to vote. The poll book entry for that voter is marked "incapacitated" and "assisted." In the privacy of a polling booth, the assisting person informs the voter of the candidates running for office and asks for the voter's choice in a manner that cannot indicate that choice to anyone else. Any candidate(s) present can be asked to leave the room while the voter is being assisted. The ballot is marked as directed and returned to the returning officer, who deposits it into the ballot box.

Interpreter

If a person coming to vote cannot read or does not understand English, they must sign a Declaration of Incapacitated Elector as noted above. The returning officer completes a Certificate of Attestation and appoints an interpreter. The interpreter completes the Oath of Interpreter (Election Form 13) and Declaration of Secrecy. In the privacy of the polling booth, he/she informs the voter of the candidates and ask for the voter's choice in a manner that does not indicate to anyone else how the person is voting. The interpreter may help the person mark the ballot. The elector or the interpreter returns the folded ballot paper to the returning officer, who places it into the ballot box.

Any candidate(s) present can be asked to leave the room while the voter is assisted. The poll book will note that the voter was "incapacitated" and "assisted."

AFTER THE POLLS CLOSE – ELECTION RETURNS

The way the election results are handled and announced will vary, depending upon the size of the community. Any information or results are unofficial until legally confirmed by the returning officer.

When the poll closes, the returning officer counts the ballots in the presence of the poll clerk(s), candidates and/or scrutineers. The poll clerk records the number of spoiled and declined ballots, and the number of ballots counted, then checks the count against the poll book to ensure that numbers balance, and reports the results to the returning officer. The returning officer and poll clerk then count the ballots cast for each candidate and record the results. The ballots and all election materials, except the poll book, are placed into sealed packets, locked into the ballot box and delivered to the returning officer.

Any time before 5 p.m. the day after the election, in the presence of the returning officer, any voter of the community may inspect the poll book for any poll and any statement of votes.

RECOUNT

Recounts are a process that allows independent verification of the returning officer's count of the ballots. A recount must be requested in the event of a tie, which would result in more candidates elected than positions to be filled. A candidate asks the returning officer for a recount. The returning officer then applies to the Principal Electoral Officer for a recount. (In an incorporated community, the application must go to a judge.)

The PEO (or the judge) sets a date and time for the recount, and informs all parties. The PEO also advises the appropriate regional office, so that the ballot box with the material from the election can be made available for the recount. Only authorized persons may be present during the recount. The ballot box containing election material is produced, opened, and ballot envelopes opened. The PEO recounts the ballots, using the same procedures as the returning officer. Each ballot is examined in the same manner. Ballots are then tallied. The PEO certifies the result to the returning officer, and the ballots are resealed in their packets. The results may be

- declaration of candidates elected, or
- a new election to be held.

On completion of the recount, the PEO arranges for the ballot box and materials to be held for the time required by law, and then destroyed. A candidate who feels the recount is not correct has seven days after the recount to appeal to a judge.

BENEFITS TO YOU:

COMPENSATION

Will you be paid? Regulations under *The Northern Affairs Act* establish and set the rates of honorariums. Other government policies set the rates and conditions of payments for such items as reimbursement for expenses incurred while on council business.

Personal Satisfaction! Most community electors know a good member of council and are willing to re-elect that person for good performance. In addition, you may have the satisfaction of achieving something of benefit to your community.

RECOGNITION - NOW YOU ARE ELECTED

Congratulations! The election is over and has made you a public figure. Your private life will probably be the subject of a lot more public conversation now, whether you like it or not. What you now say and do become important news in the community. Even your private life will become very public. Your public comments may be distorted, magnified, criticized and perhaps taken out of context. You should be prepared to realize that a lot of this type of conversation will be based on rumour and treat it as such.

Newly elected council members may become disheartened or frustrated by their inability to change the system. They may feel that unnecessary restraints have been placed upon the powers of council. At the beginning of this booklet, we explained the process that gives authority to the provinces and the local government level. Provincial law governs the activities of a community council and a local committee. It also permits a community to incorporate and take on greater responsibility for its own actions.

SOME LAST-MINUTE QUESTIONS...

CAN YOU CHANGE YOUR MIND?

Before 2 p.m. on the second day after nomination day, you may submit your withdrawal as a candidate, in writing, to the returning officer. The returning officer must accept your withdrawal if enough candidates remain to fill the office.

IS AN ELECTION REQUIRED IN ALL CASES?

If the number of candidates and the number of offices to be filled are equal at the close of nominations, the returning officer will declare the candidate(s) duly elected. They are elected by acclamation.

If there are more candidates than are required to fill the offices, the returning officer publishes or posts the names of the candidates after the time for withdrawals has passed. The dates, times and locations of the polling stations are also published. This starts the election poll process.

A CANDIDATES CHECKLIST

1) Decide which office you wish to represent (mayor or councillor).

2) Establish that you have the statutory citizenship and residency qualifications. Ensure that you are not disqualified from holding office (occupation, residency, etc.) It is your responsibility to file a proper nomination paper.

3) Note the application times, dates and places for:

   - *Filing nomination* – At least two weeks before the regular election, between 1 p.m. and 9 p.m, at a convenient place in the community decided by the returning officer.

   - *Advance Polls* – 4 to 7 days before the regular poll between 5 p.m. and 9 p.m.

- *Election Day* – Second Wednesday in February – polls are open between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m.

4) Note the name and office location of the returning officer. In many cases the returning officer is the community administrator.

5) Obtain a nomination paper and a copy of the latest revised electors list from the returning officer.

6) Complete the nomination portion of the nomination paper and determine the qualifications required for voters who are eligible to nominate you for election to council.

7) Obtain the required number of signatures of qualified voters as nominators on your nomination paper.

8) Complete and sign the Acceptance of Candidate portion of the nomination paper. Sign the Declaration of Candidate in the presence of a Commissioner for Oaths, or other person authorized to administer such oaths or declaration.

9) File your nomination paper with the returning officer at least two weeks before the election.

10) After you have been nominated, you may, in writing, appoint a person as your official scrutineer throughout the election. The returning officer must be advised of this appointment in writing.

11) On Election Day – ***DO NOT FORGET TO VOTE***.

DEPARTMENT CONTACTS

For further information, please contact Aboriginal and Northern Affairs:

Freda Lepine
Principal Electoral Officer
Inter-Regional Services
59 Elizabeth Drive – Box 20
Thompson, Manitoba, R8N 1X4
Phone: 204-677-6863
Fax: 204-677-6525

Community Support Services
Aboriginal and Northern Affairs
59 Elizabeth Drive (Box 27)
Thompson, Manitoba, R8N 1X4
Phone: 204-677-6786
Fax: 204-677-6525

Community Support Services
Aboriginal and Northern Affairs
27-2nd Avenue. S.W. (Box 15)
Dauphin, Manitoba, R7N 3E5
Phone: 204-622-2110
Fax: 204-622-2305

Community Support Services
Aboriginal and Northern Affairs
339A Main Street
Selkirk, Manitoba, R1A 1T3
Phone: 204-785-5085
Fax: 204-785-5218